



John Muir Correspondence (PDFs)

1870-05-29

Letter from John Muir to [Jeanne C. Carr], [1870] May 29.

John Muir

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many of them⁴³ as you wish together
with as many other Yosemite things
that you may ask for I send it out
to you before the pack train makes its
last trip. I know the Spirea you
speak of, it is abundant all around
the top of the valley & on the rocks at
Lake Tenaya & reaches almost to the very
summit about Mt. Dana. There is
also a purple one very abundant in the
grassy meadows of Yosemite Creek a mile
or two back from the brink of the falls
Of course it will be a source of pleasure
to me to procure you anything you
may desire. I should like to see
that ground again. I saw some in
Cuba but they did not exceed twenty
feet or thirty feet in height.

I have thought of a walk
in the wild gardens of Wondolula &
now that you speak of my going there
it becomes very probable as you
seem to understand me better than
I do myself, I have no square idea
about the time I shall get myself
away from here. I shall of course
stay till you come. I fear that the
Agency will be in the spirit world at
that time. You say that I ought
to have such a place as you saw
in the gardens of that mile & half of
Climate. Well I think those Lemon
& orange groves would do perhaps to
make a living but for a garden I

00514

[13]

[1870]

#42

1870

Sunday May 29th Yosemite
Dear friend I recd your "apology"
two days ago & ran my eyes hastily
over it three or four times at a time
to find the place that would say
you were coming, but your
"fear" that you cannot come
at all, & only "hope" that the doctor
may; but I shall continue to look
for you nevertheless. The Chicago party
you speak of were here & away again before
your letter arrived. All sorts of human
stuff is being poured into our valley
this year. The blank fleshly apathy
with which most of it comes in contact
with the rock & water & plants of the place, is
most amazing. I do not wonder that
the thought of such people being here
makes you "mad", but after all
Mrs Carr, they are about harmless
they climb sprawlingly to their saddles

May 29. 1870.

3 [5]
should not have anything less
than a trace of pure nature
I was reading Thoreau's Maine
woods a short time ago, as described
by him these woods are exactly like
those of Canada west. How I long
to meet Linnaeus & Chocoma's Impudens
once more. I would rather see these
two children of the evergreen woods than
all the twenty seven species of palm
that flourish on the Amazon.

These summer days "go on"
calmly & serenely. Scarce a mark of
the frost & snow of the 13th is visible
The breeches are four or five feet
high already - The earliest Apples
have opened & the whole crop of
buds is ready to burst. The river
does not overflow its banks now
but it is exactly brim full.

The thermometer averages about
75° at noon. We have sunshine
every morning from a bright blue

like overgrown frogs pulling themselves up a stream bank through the bent sedges, slide up the valley with about as much emotion as the horses they ride upon. - are comfortable when they have "done it all" & long for the safety & flatness of their beds for horses.

In your first letter to the valley you complain of the desecrating influences of the fashionable hordes about to visit here, & say that you mean to come ^{only} once more "into the beyond" I am pretty sure that you are wrong in saying "putting so" for the tide of visitors will float slowly about the bottom of the valley as a harmless cum collecting in hotel & saloon cellars, leaving the rocks & hills eloquent as ever, & untroubled, with imperishable beauty & greatness, & recollect that the top of the valley is more than half way to real heaven & the Lord has many mansions away in the sun. equal in power & glory to

Yosemite though not quite so open & I venture to say that you will yet see the valley many times both in front of the body,

I am glad you are going to the coast mountains to sleep on Diablo, Angelo or this, I am sure that you will be lifted above all the effects of your material work - There is a precious natural charm in sleeping under the open starry sky, you will have a very perfect view of the Yosemite valley, & the snowing heavily walls of the Sierra Nevada. I lay for weeks last summer upon a bed of pine leaves at the edge of a daisy gentian meadow in full view of Mt Dana.

Mrs Hutchings says that the ^{bulbs} lily roots were so far advanced in their growth when she dug some to send you that they could not be packed without being broken. but I am going to be here all summer & I know where the grandest plantation of these lilies grows & I will box up as

sky-ranges of Cumuli appear towards the summits with great regularity every day about 11 o'clock making a splendid back ground for the south dome - in a few hours these clouds disappear & give up the sky to sunny evening.

Mrs Hutchings arrived here from Washington a week ago. There is risk or severity - visitors here at present.

I have read only two letters from you this winter & spring, dated Jan 22^d & May 7th.

I passed your intimation on for you she writes that she knew the way to Oakland that she might come to you. Remember me to the Doctor and all your boys & to your little Ellie I remain ever yours most cordially J. Min